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## Fedor Emelianenko cut by Zuffa LLC

By Franklin McNeil | ESPN.com

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PHILADELPHIA -- [Fedor Emelianenko](#), once considered the best fighter in mixed martial arts, is being released by Zuffa LLC, UFC president Dana White said Thursday.

"He's being cut," White said after a news conference to promote UFC 133, which will be held at Wells Fargo Center Saturday night.

Emelianenko, a former Pride heavyweight champion who has fought on Showtime under the Strikeforce banner since November 2009, has lost three fights in a row. In his most recent bout, Emelianenko was stopped in the first round by Strikeforce light heavyweight titleholder [Dan Henderson](#).

Evgeni Kogan, head of global operations for Emelianenko's promoter, M-1 Global, claimed Zuffa is not in the position to make decisions on the future of the Russian heavyweight's career.

"Dana White announced earlier today that Fedor is no longer a Zuffa fighter," Kogan said in a statement. "Truth is Fedor was never under contract with Zuffa. Fedor's contract is with Showtime. He remains a Showtime fighter."

A representative for Showtime declined to comment on Emelianenko's status with the network.

For several years, White has questioned the validity of Emelianenko's status as a top-rated fighter. "You guys [media] were calling him the pound-for-pound best in the world. You guys were saying he was the best heavyweight ever, not me," White told ESPN.com.

"I don't want to say anything bad about this guy because I like him, but it's like having your promotion carried by Kimbo Slice. This guy is going to carry your promotion? No.

"What you do is put the best fighters in the world against the best fighters and you see who wins."

Despite White's reservations, Zuffa LLC held negotiations with M-1 Global. It was Zuffa's hope that Emelianenko would agree to a deal and fight in UFC.

Those negotiations never produced a contract, but Emelianenko would eventually compete under Forza LLC, a subsidiary of Zuffa, after the Las Vegas-based company purchased Strikeforce earlier this year.

It is not yet known what the next move will be for Emelianenko, who has a professional mixed martial arts record of 31-4-0, with one no-contest.

Franklin McNeil covers mixed martial arts and boxing for ESPN.com. Follow him on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Franklin\\_McNeil](#)

Josh Gross, who covers mixed martial arts for ESPN.com, contributed to this report.

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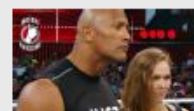


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